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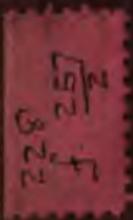
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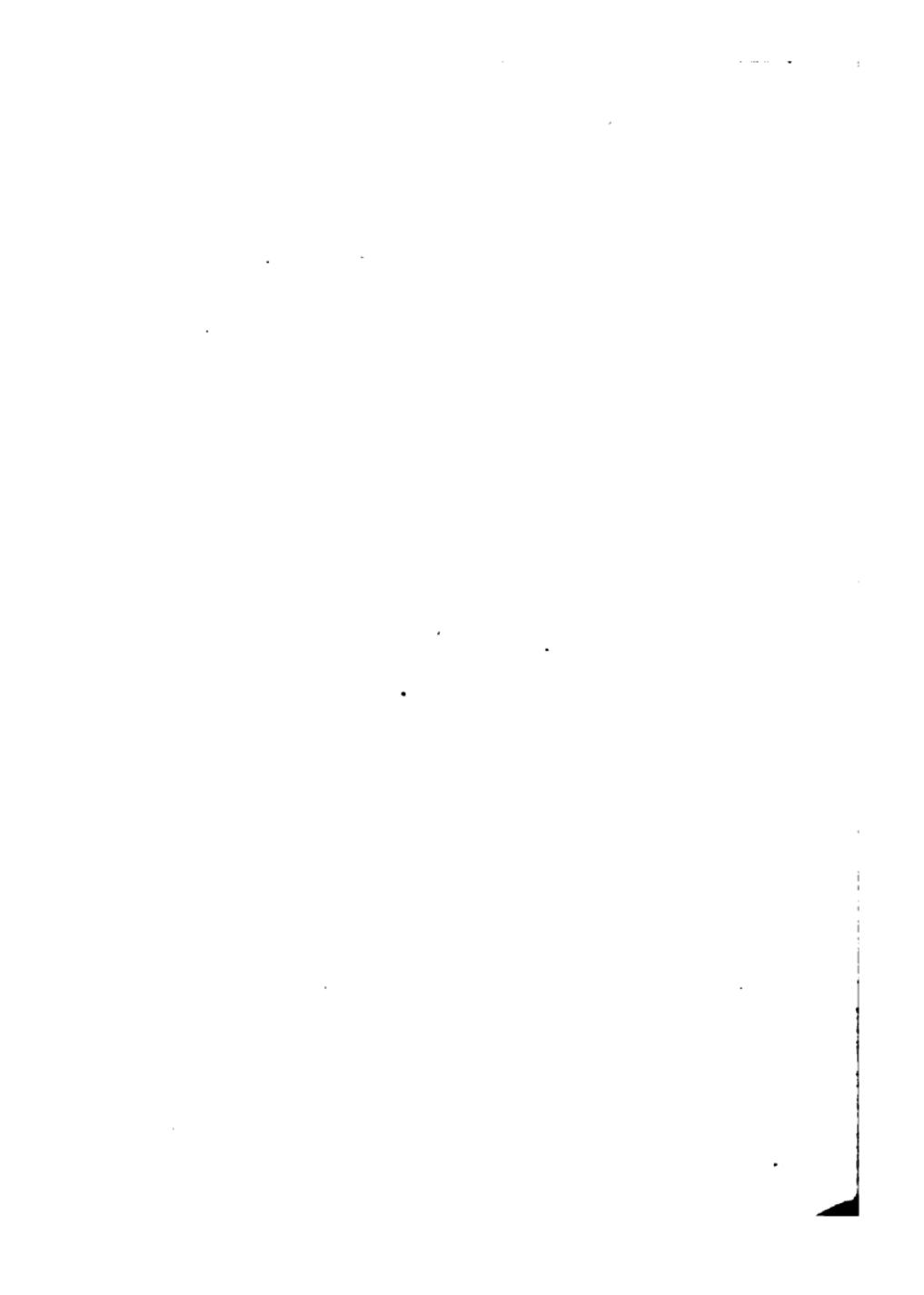
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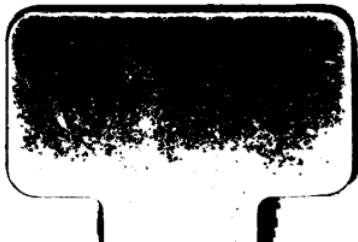
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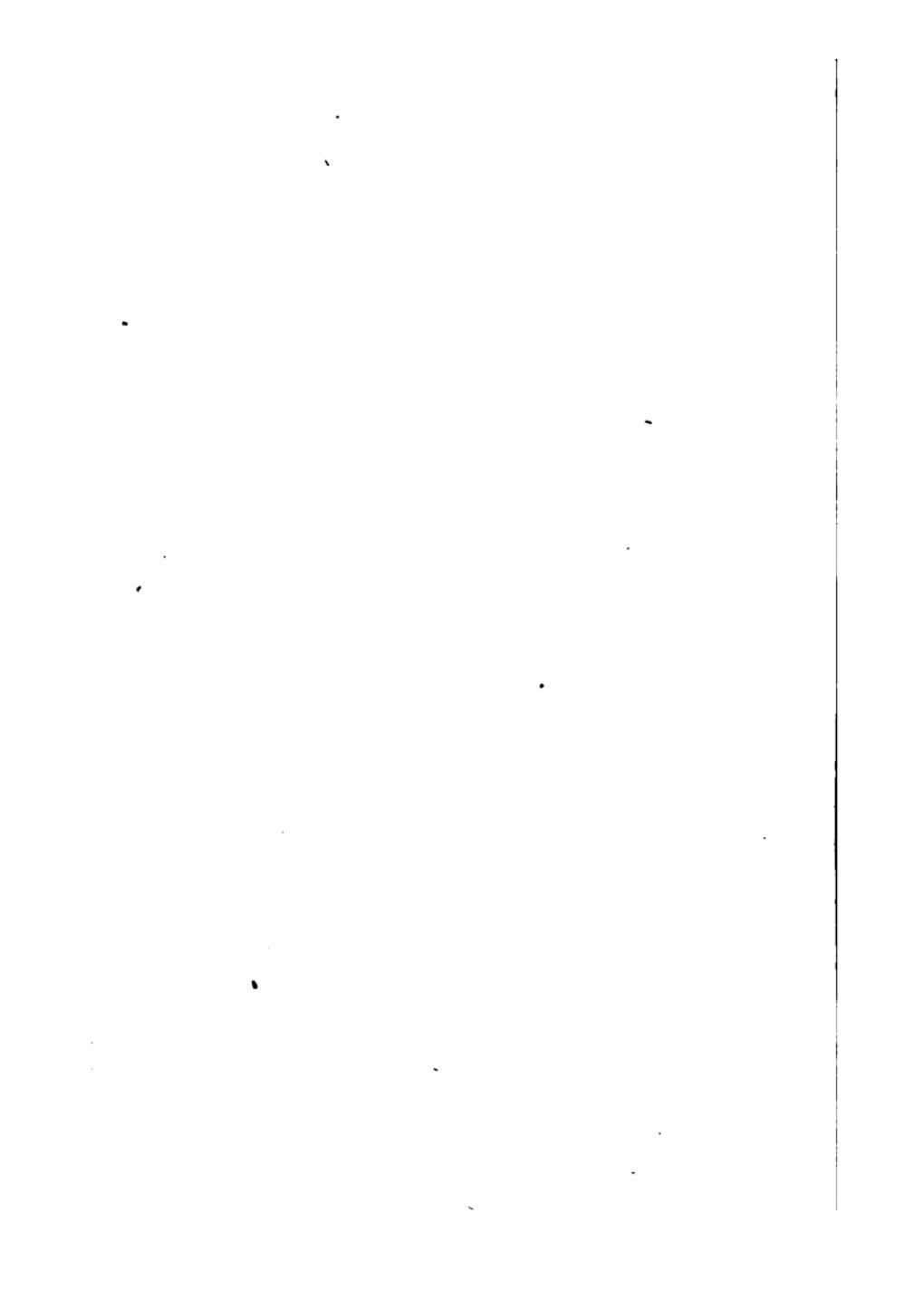
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CONVERSATIONS
ON THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

For the Use of Children.

BY
MRS. MARCET.

IN CONTINUATION.

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CONVERSATIONS
ON THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CONVERSATION THIRTY-SIXTH.

AN EXCURSION.

THE lessons of English History were interrupted for some time by an excursion which Mrs. B. and her family made to the sea-coast. On their road toward Dover, Sophy was delighted at the sight of the number of ships sailing up and down the river Thames.

“ What large ships they are ! ” cried she : “ but I hope they are not men-of-war ? ”

“ No,” replied her mother ; “ they are all merchantmen.”

“ I am very glad of that,” said Sophy ; “ for they do good instead of harm. I wonder what merchandise they have on board ?”

“ They contain a great variety of goods,” answered her mother. “ Those which sail down the river toward the sea, are laden with English merchandise to be sold in foreign countries : those which are sailing up the river toward London, bring cargoes of foreign goods to our market.”

“ Look at that large vessel yonder, mamma ; I wonder what merchandise it brings, for it is sailing up the river.”

“ It brings goods from the West Indies ; that is, sugar, coffee, and tobacco. There is another there, not far distant from it, which comes from Turkey, and brings us carpets, figs, currants, raisins, and rhubarb.”

“ I hope you do not call rhubarb goods, mamma ; its taste is so very bad.”

“ True ; but it is good for you when you are ill. Goods means merchandise of all descriptions ; and there is no merchandise which is not good for some purpose or other.”

“ No, certainly,” said Sophy ; “ nobody would buy things that were good for nothing ; and we should not be so foolish as to send ships a great way off to fetch merchandise that nobody would buy. But yet, mamma,” said she, smiling, “ I like the goods best which taste good, such as oranges : are not some of those ships full of oranges ?”

“ Very probably ; those come from Spain or Portugal, and may bring also wine ; so their cargo consists of oranges and wine.”

“ Does cargo mean all the goods the ship holds ?” inquired Sophy.

“ Yes ; a merchantman is laden with a cargo of goods : now you know all the proper terms.”

“ What a number of things we must send abroad in exchange for all these goods ! ” observed Sophy.

“ It is that,” replied her mother, “ which sets so many people to work in our manufactories : if they had only their own countrymen to work for, they would not have nearly so much to do as they have now ; for, beside making what we want at home, they make much of what is wanted in foreign countries, and bring back all these foreign goods in exchange.”

“ But, mamma, is there always money enough to pay so great a number of workmen ? For, I remember you once said, there was never want of work to employ workmen, unless there was a want of money to pay them.”

“ The more goods we send abroad, the more goods we shall receive in

exchange ; and the richer we become, the better we shall be able to pay the workmen.”

“ Richer in goods, mamma, but not in money to pay workmen’s wages.”

“ You seem to have forgotten, my dear, that workmen are not supported by the money paid them in wages, but by the food and clothing that money enables them to purchase ; therefore, whether we grow rich in gold or in goods, they are both of them wealth.”

“ Yet it would be difficult to pay wages with goods,” said Sophy ; “ for, they may be goods which the workmen are not in want of ; and I have not forgotten what you told me of the inconvenience of exchanging goods.”

“ We should never pay wages in goods,” replied her mother, “ but sell them for money, and then pay the wages in money ; and, if there was not a sufficiency of money to pay for the increased quantity of goods, we should

send some of them to America and exchange them for gold."

"But," said Sophy, "if we send abroad as much goods as we receive at home in exchange, how shall we be the richer?"

"We become richer by trading with foreign countries in two ways: first, because we receive what we want most in exchange for what we want least; therefore, what we receive is more valuable to us than what we send abroad."

"Oh, yes! I remember. It is like Cary and me, exchanging a pair of stockings for a pair of shoes, when she had two pairs of stockings and no shoes, while I had two pairs of shoes and no stockings."

"Just so," replied her mother. "The second way in which we become rich by foreign trade is by its enabling us to employ more workmen. Let us suppose that we had no foreign trade, and that John, Thomas, and Richard

could do all the work that was required for England."

Sophy laughed heartily at the idea of three men being able to do all the work of the country; but she said, "Go on, mamma, I understand you."

"You understand, then," said her mother, "that, however absurd such a supposition may be, it will answer my purpose of explaining the subject to you. Well, if afterwards we began to trade with foreign countries, more workmen would be wanted to make goods to send in exchange; and Harry, William, and Charles would be set to work."

"That is to say," observed Sophy, "that twice the number of people would be employed."

"I do not think that in reality it goes quite to that extent," replied her mother; "but there is no doubt that thousands of people are employed in

manufactures for our foreign trade, who would otherwise have remained idle."

"And, mamma," said Sophy, "if more of our people worked for foreigners, more foreigners would have to work for us; so more people would be employed in both countries."

While this conversation was going on, the travellers reached Rochester; and Mrs. B. pointed out to her daughter the immense hulks of the men-of-war, dismantled and lying by till they were wanted. They had neither masts, sails, guns, nor any thing ready either for fighting or sailing.

"I declare," said Sophy, "they look more like houses than ships; only they are floating on the water instead of standing on dry ground."

Some of them, her mother told her, were used as prisons for convicts who were to be transported; others as hospitals for the sick.

The travellers dined at the city of

Canterbury ; and, while the dinner was preparing, Mrs. B. and her family went to see the Cathedral. It interested Sophy extremely, because she recollects that Thomas à Becket had been archbishop of that place ; but, when she came to the spot on which he had been murdered, she was greatly shocked ; because they shewed her spots on the pavement which are said to have been stains of his blood ; and she hurried away from it down one of the large aisles, and began to admire the painted windows.

“ How very much this church is like Westminster Abbey ! ” said she.

“ It is the same style of building,” replied her mother : “ this style of building is called Gothic architecture, because those who gave it that name supposed that it was first introduced by the Goths, who, you know, were one of the chief hordes of barbarians who conquered Europe.”

“ But,” said Sophy, “ how could barbarians know how to build such beautiful churches ? ”

“ It was not till after they had become in some measure civilised that these cathedrals were built, and they have since been so altered and improved that it would be difficult to say to what period they belong.”

“ Still I cannot help being surprised that they could build such very magnificent churches.”

“ Rich and beautiful as the Gothic order of architecture is,” said her mother, “ in its origin it was very simple, such as you might expect in barbarous nations living in woods and forests. Suppose there were two rows of trees near enough that their branches might be brought to meet, and that you were to tie a branch of each of these trees to one of its opposite neighbour, the two branches would form a pointed or Gothic arch. Look ! ”

added she, pointing to the arch ; “ these large stone pillars may be supposed to represent the trees, and the slender ones which spring from them, the branches.”

“ It is just so,” said Sophy ; “ I might almost fancy myself walking up and down an avenue of trees in this long aisle ; but then it must be in winter, when there are no leaves on the trees ; but, perhaps,” added she, laughing, “ all those little flowers and leaves, carved in stone, are meant for the blossoms and leaves of the trees. But, in St. Paul’s, mamma, there is nothing of this kind.”

“ No ; St. Paul’s was built much later, at a period when the Gothic architecture was abandoned to return to something more like that of the Greeks and Romans, who, you know, were very celebrated for their buildings, long before the northern barbarians were heard of.”

“ I wonder,” said Sophy, “ that, as we became more civilised, we did not invent a new sort of architecture, instead of returning to an old one.”

“ We should neither despise nor value a thing because it is old or because it is new, but consider whether it is fit or unfit for the purpose for which it is designed—beautiful or ugly. Now, though we stood little chance of inventing any new style of building so beautiful as the Grecian, yet it must be confessed that it is not in every respect adapted to the climate of this country; our habitations requiring a much greater number of chimneys and windows than are necessary in the more genial climate of Greece, where both heat and light are so much stronger than they are here.”

The travellers now reached Dover; and Sophy, who had been impatient to see one of the feudal castles, cried out,

“ Oh, mamma, is not that great old

castle which stands on the hill, one of the feudal castles?"

Her mother replied that it was not ; that it was a fortress built, not for a family to live in, but for soldiers to defend the coast from enemies when we were at war, and to prevent their landing.

They continued their journey along the sea-coast, passing through Brighton and Worthing ; and, when they arrived at Arundel, Mrs. B. said she would now shew her daughter the remains of a real feudal castle, and took her to that of the Duke of Norfolk. Sophy was surprised to see a large house, very much like those in which noblemen now live ; but, her mother observed, "this is a modern building in which the family resides ; and the old tower, which is almost covered with ivy, and is inhabited only by some venerable owls, is the only part remaining of the old feudal castle."

The travellers now continued their route to Hastings, where they were to spend some time. Here the children amused themselves, playing upon the sea-shore, and making pits in the sands for the rising tide to fill with water. One day, they gathered together a great heap of shingles, and Sophy, having drawn a line on the sands with a stick, seated herself with great dignity on this heap, which she called her throne, whilst her brothers and sisters stood around her. "Now, mamma," said she, "guess what we are playing at."

"King Canute, I suppose," replied her mother, "but, do you mean to remain there till the waves have washed your feet?"

"Oh, no," said Sophy: "if the waves will not obey my commands any better than they did King Canute's, I shall jump down just in time to escape them;" but, as she was speaking, a large

wave broke at the foot of her throne, and she was so thoroughly wetted by the spray, that she was obliged to go home to change her clothes.

Sophy was very eager to know whereabouts the Normans landed, and on what spot the battle was fought, in which William gained the title of Conqueror, and where poor king Harold, the son of the cow-driver, was killed. So her mother took her first to Pevensey Bay, where the landing was made, and afterwards to the town of Battle, so called from the battle having been fought there. She also shewed her Battle Abbey, which Sophy again fancied was one of the feudal castles. "I dare say," exclaimed she, "that was built by one of the Norman barons; for, you know, mamma, that it was William the Conqueror who divided the land among his followers, and first introduced the feudal system into England."

agreeable spoiled children are ; but then, if they do any thing very wrong, they may be controlled by their parents, whilst a king is under no control ; and, being flattered and indulged by his courtiers, his temper and self-love become every day more insupportable, if he chooses to give way to them.”

“ Yes,” said Sophy, “ if the king cannot command himself nobody else can command him. How shockingly Henry treated the poor monks and nuns, who, though they certainly were wrong to shut themselves up in convents, and not work like other people, thought at least they were doing right.”

“ Most of them, I doubt not, acted from mistaken religious motives,” replied her mother, “ but others might be induced by a love of idleness : however, Henry was inexcusable in turning them adrift as he did ; it would have been easy to have put

down the convents without inflicting pain. He might have suffered the monks and nuns to have remained there for the rest of their lives, but prohibited any other persons from taking the monastic vows : this is the way in which many convents have been since put down in Germany : but he was too eager to seize upon the wealth these convents possessed to submit to delay."

" Then, mamma, the only good thing Henry did, I mean reforming the religion, arose from no wish to improve it, but merely that he might be divorced from poor Catherine of Arragon, and be at the head of the church, instead of the Pope."

" That is true," replied her mother ; " but observe how God in his mercy brings good out of evil ; if Henry had not quarrelled with the Pope he would not have cared about reforming the church. It was owing to Henry's un-

governable passions that the religion of the country was changed ; but it was a merciful dispensation of Providence that such a change should prove beneficial ; that the corruptions which had by degrees crept into the Roman church, should be exposed and renounced, and that religious worship should be stripped of those tawdry ornaments which so disfigured it that it could scarcely be recognised for that pure and simple religion which was preached by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“ And yet, mamma,” said Sophy, “ when we were in France, and I saw all the beautiful churches, full of fine statues and pictures, and the priests dressed out so grand and so gay, and little boys in white gowns swinging about silver pots of incense which smelt so nice, I could not help admiring it all very much. And then, sometimes, on their great Saints’ days, there were long processions of little

girls, no bigger than myself, dressed out with flowers, their hair curiously braided, and looking so pretty and so pleased, that I was very sorry there were no such ceremonies in our country."

"That is a very natural idea for a child," replied her mother; "and there are Protestants who think like you, and say that, in purifying the Catholic church of its corruptions, we have stripped it of those ornaments which make a great impression on the minds of the people, and are often the source of religious feelings. That may sometimes be the case; but, I fear that, on the whole, such ceremonies give rise rather to vain than to holy thoughts. Religion is of a higher order of feeling; but, it is a source of enjoyment only after we have repented of our sins, and taken pains to improve our conduct: we should then never be without a sense of religious feeling, an habitual

love and gratitude to God for all the blessings we are constantly receiving from him; this feeling should accompany us wherever we go, and unite itself with all our occupations. If you walked out on a fine day, or admired a beautiful prospect; if you smelt a sweet flower, or eat a nice fruit; or if you were at play with your little friends, you would feel thankfulness and gratitude to the Author of all these good things, which would heighten your enjoyment."

"But these enjoyments seem so different from religion," said Sophy, "that I should have thought it hardly right to have thanked God for them."

"Whatever is enjoyed in innocence is allied to religion; it is God who has given us the sense of enjoyment, and, whenever we can gratify it with purity of mind, we should thank Him for it. But, when any excess is committed; if you have eaten fruit till you have made

yourself ill ; if you have wasted the hours of study in recreation ; or been ill-tempered, jealous, or envious in your intercourse with your playmates, you have no longer been innocently employed ; and your conscience will tell you that, instead of thanking God, you should ask pardon of Him for the evil you have done. Indeed, I consider it as a test of the innocence of any enjoyment, to be able, with a clear conscience, to thank God for it."

"I will try to remember that, mamma," said Sophy ; "it will help me to know when I have done right or wrong."

"But, in order that your conscience should judge rightly," observed her mother, "you must remember what I told you formerly respecting conscience, that it must not be blinded by ignorance ; for, though conscience tells us to do what we believe to be right, it cannot tell us what is right

unless it is enlightened by reason. The consciences of those monks and nuns who were sincere in their religion, "told them that it was right to shut themselves up in convents, and spend their lives in prayer and religious ceremonies ; whilst, if they had made use of their reason to enlighten their consciences, it would have told them that God had placed them in this world as a state of trial to prepare them for another ; that, instead of shutting out the world, our duty is to resist and overcome the temptations to which it exposes us ; that, instead of flying from its wickedness, we ought to remain in the world, to set a good example, and endeavour to correct and improve it ; and that he who leads a life of industry, intelligence, morality and religion, does the more good, the more communication he has with the rest of mankind."

" I am afraid, mamma, that Cardinal

Wolsey would not have been able, with a good conscience, to have thanked God for all the wealth and honours that he possessed, or he would never have said those remarkable words on his death-bed, — ‘If I had served God as faithfully as I have served the King, he would not have forsaken me in my last days.’ ”

“ I cannot help thinking,” observed Mrs. B., “ that Wolsey served the King no better than he served God. He inflamed Henry’s passions by indulging and gratifying them, instead of using the influence he had over him to prevail on him to moderate and control them. The only person whom Wolsey really meant to serve was himself ; to his own interests he sacrificed his faith to both the King and God, and, in the end, received the reward he merited.”

CONVERSATION THIRTY-EIGHTH.

EDWARD SIXTH.

“ Poor Edward!” exclaimed Sophy, “ what a pity he did not live! I am sure he would have made a good king when he grew up to be a man ; his uncles alone were to blame for all that he did wrong. However, they settled the reformed religion, and that was a very good thing. How happy the priests must have been to be allowed to marry like other people, and to have little children to love and take care of.”

“ Many of the clergy did not approve of this change,” replied her mother ; “ they said that a priest ought to have nothing to do or care for but his

parishioners ; and that, if he had a wife and children, his time and his affections would be taken up by them, instead of being wholly devoted to his parish."

" Well, there may be some truth in that," observed Sophy.

" I believe," said her mother, " that a man, who has a wife and children of his own, will be more likely to feel for those who have wives and children ; and to assist them in distress, and to teach them to lead a good life, and maintain their families by their industry. The heart of a man, who can never know those natural affections, becomes more or less hardened ; and he can hardly avoid being envious of those who enjoy a happiness from which he is shut out. I am persuaded that a married clergyman with a family is more likely to make a good parish priest than one who is single."

" Then you know, mamma," said Sophy, " that our clergyman's wife at

Ash Grove teaches all the children to sing psalms at church ; and besides, she often goes to assist in giving them lessons in the school, and her daughters teach some of the little children to read ; and then they go with their father to see the sick people, and take them medicines and food to do them good."

"Very true," replied her mother ; "so you see that a wife and children, instead of drawing away a clergyman from the care of his parishioners, may help him to perform his duties towards them ; and no person is better able to distribute charity with judgment and propriety than the clergyman and his family, because he knows more about his parishioners than any one else, and can judge how far their distress arises from misconduct, and how far from misfortune, so that he can administer relief in proportion to the

merits and circumstances of the sufferers."

"But then, mamma, clergymen are not in general rich enough to be able to give away a great deal."

"Nor is a great deal usually required," said her mother, "unless under any peculiar distress, such as a village being burnt, or an infectious fever falling on a great number of the poor ; and, in such cases, the clergyman would easily collect money from the richer parishioners, to relieve the unusual and unavoidable distresses of the poor."

CONVERSATION THIRTY-NINTH.

QUEEN MARY.

“ WELL ! ” exclaimed Sophy, “ I declare that Mary outdid her father in cruelty ! But, is it not strange, that, being the daughter of poor Catherine of Arragon, she should have been so cruel ? ”

“ Catherine of Arragon was much to be pitied for her misfortunes,” replied her mother ; “ yet she was of a haughty character. Mary’s crimes sprung from false ideas of religion, acting on a morose temper ; I cannot help thinking that if she had had a kind husband and a family of young children, it would have softened her

character, and made her less vindictive and sanguinary. I feel inclined to be more angry with Gardiner and all those who inflamed her cruel temper than with Mary herself, who was a weak woman, led astray by mistaken ideas of religion.”

“They must have been mistaken ideas, indeed,” said Sophy, “if she fancied that God, who is so merciful and kind to all his creatures, could take pleasure in seeing them suffer.”

“Then, how shocking it was to cut off poor Lady Jane Grey’s head, who had no wish to be queen; and, if she was brought to consent to accept the crown, it was merely to please her father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland.”

“But,” observed her mother, “Lady Jane Grey did wrong to consent to what was unlawful, to please any one. Had the Duke been powerful enough

to have raised the country in her favour, it would have produced a civil war. Lady Jane would then have caused the death of hundreds, perhaps of thousands, of innocent people ; and, with her amiable disposition, this result would have given her more pain than suffering death herself on the scaffold.”

“ But then you see, mamma, the Protestant religion in England was overturned again by Mary ; and this would not have happened, if Lady Jane Grey had come to the throne.”

“ Mary,” said Mrs. B., “ was the lawful heir ; therefore she ought to have reigned. It is no excuse for doing wrong that good may come of it. God Almighty, it is true, often turns the evil which is done by wicked men to good ; but they are not the less blameable for their bad deeds ; and even those who do wrong from ignorance, or from mistaken motives, are more or less

answerable for the consequences of their actions, though they are certainly much less to blame than those who do wrong from wicked motives."

CONVERSATION FORTIETH.

ELIZABETH.

“ WELL, mamma, I am rather at a loss what to think of Elizabeth ; sometimes she was so good and so clever, and tried so much to make the people happy, that I admire her extremely. But then sometimes she governed so despotically, that I almost dislike her.”

“ The race of Tudors were all inclined to despotism,” observed her mother ; “ but, as Elizabeth had the welfare of her subjects much at heart, she was extremely beloved, and all her faults were overlooked. She was a much more sensible woman than her sister Mary, and chose the most wise men for her ministers, such as Bacon,

Burleigh, and Walsingham ; and though she had such favourites as Leicester and Essex, she never allowed them to mislead her in the important concerns of government."

" But there is one thing," said Sophy, " for which I never can forgive Elizabeth, and that is, putting Mary Queen of Scots to death. Mary has been accused of some very wicked actions, perhaps she was guilty, and perhaps her subjects were right in rebelling against her ; but, when she fled to England for safety, and threw herself upon Queen Elizabeth's protection, it was ungenerous and unjust of Elizabeth to shut her up in prison for so many years, and cruel too to bring her at last to the block."

" That is true," replied her mother ; " Elizabeth's treatment of Mary is the greatest stain upon her character, and Mary's sad and unjust death has given us an interest in her history, which

she would never otherwise have obtained.”

“ I am glad,” observed Sophy, “ that Elizabeth did not marry that hateful King Philip, or even one of the French princes ; which might have prevented her re-establishing the Protestant religion ; but then she should have married some Protestant, and have had children to succeed her.”

“ I am surprised she did not marry,” replied her mother, “ had it been merely to prevent James, whom she did not like, from coming to the throne. But she could bear no control ; and though, if she had married, she alone would have been the reigning sovereign, she thought that a husband might assume some authority over her. Then the example of her sister’s marriage was not encouraging ; for Philip both despised and neglected Mary, though she did every thing she could to please him.”

“Oh, certainly,” said Sophy; “Elizabeth did much better to conquer his invincible Armada at sea, than to marry him.”

“Elizabeth had other merits,” continued Mrs. B.; “she gave great encouragement to learned men. Shakespeare, the most celebrated poet England ever produced, wrote most of his beautiful plays during her reign; and in one of them he introduced a doll on the stage, to represent the Queen when, as a baby, she was to be christened; and made the courtiers foretell what a great and glorious reign the child would have.”

“That was not very difficult to prophesy,” said Sophy, “after she was grown up, and had reigned many years; but it must have flattered Elizabeth. And did he not write a tragedy on the death of Mary Queen of Scots? it is so interesting a subject.”

“Oh no,” replied her mother, “that

would have offended Elizabeth : it was too delicate a subject for him to treat of during her reign, or that of her successor James, who was the son of Mary. There have, however, been several tragedies written later on the death of Mary ; for, the story is very interesting ; especially if the faults and vices of Mary are either not noticed, or glossed over ; which poets take care to do, in order to excite a strong interest in her favour ; and hence Mary has gained more in the opinion of the world than she was entitled to by her real character.”

CONVERSATION FORTY-FIRST.

JAMES THE FIRST.

“ I REGRET more than ever that Elizabeth did not marry, and that she had not children to succeed her,” said Sophy, “ now that I see what a weak king James was. The people put up with the faults of Elizabeth, because she governed wisely ; but I wonder they should have submitted to be so despotically governed by such a foolish man as James.”

“ The people will bear a great deal,” replied her mother, “ rather than rise in rebellion. If every man, who thought that the country was ill governed, imagined that he had a right to resist it, we should never have a moment’s

peace. Every honest man knows that he is bound to obey the laws of the land in which he lives ; and a government must be both unjust and cruel, as well as arbitrary, before the people will be induced to make an insurrection against it.”

“ But if,” said Sophy, “ the king sets them the example of breaking the laws, it seems to give them a right to do so too.”

“ James did not go far enough to authorise a rebellion,” said her mother. “ Then, the people know that the horrors of civil war are certain, while its success is very doubtful ; you will see in the next reign what occurred.”

CONVERSATION FORTY-SECOND.

CHARLES THE FIRST.

“ OH ! poor King Charles,” exclaimed Sophy ; “ one almost forgets his faults, when one reads of his coming to so sad an end.”

“ Yes,” replied her mother ; “ you cannot but pity him ; but that must not prevent your pitying also the thousands of poor men, who lost their lives during this long civil war, and the number of wretched widows and fatherless children it produced.”

“ But, if the people had not risen in rebellion,” observed Sophy, “ all that would not have happened.”

“ Then,” said her mother, “ their liberties would have been sacrificed ;

the king would have reigned without a parliament, and have raised money of his own authority ; both of which things, you know, were contrary to law."

" How difficult it must be to determine," said Sophy, " how long or how much the people ought to suffer from bad government before they rise up against it ! Elizabeth often seemed to govern as despotically as Charles, and yet the people loved and admired her, and obeyed her from affection as well as from duty."

" Because," replied her mother, " though Elizabeth governed arbitrarily, she governed wisely, and sought to render her people prosperous and happy. And for this purpose she did not consider it as necessary to make them free, but to make them obedient to those laws which she thought would best contribute to their welfare ; and, so great was their enthusiasm for her, that they willingly submitted to whatever she ordained."

“ But when the Stuarts came to the throne, things changed. These sovereigns were still more fond of power than Elizabeth, but they did not possess her talents to gain the love and submission of the people. The people had gradually acquired more knowledge, and were not inclined to blind obedience to sovereigns who were weak as well as arbitrary, and whom they felt they had power to resist.”

“ Then,” said Sophy, “ if the kings grew more foolish, while the people grew more wise, it is no wonder the wise people should get the better.”

CONVERSATION FORTY-THIRD.

CROMWELL.

“WELL, I must say,” exclaimed Sophy, “that it was abominable of Cromwell to put Charles to death because he would govern without a parliament ; and then to go himself and turn out all the members of parliament, in order to govern as despotically as Charles did.”

“I should rather,” observed her mother, “compare the despotism with which Cromwell reigned to that of Elizabeth ; for, if he was not a good man, he was at least a wise one ; and you may recollect our once doubting whether a wise bad man or a good silly one made the worst King.”

“Yes, I remember ; I think it was

in the reign of Henry the Sixth, when the country suffered so much from civil war ; owing, in a great measure, to the weakness of character of the king.”

“ It is certain,” said her mother, “ that England was more prosperous and happy under the sway of Cromwell than it had been for a long time. He had no expensive court, and he raised no more taxes than were necessary to pay the officers of government. Indeed, he lived more like a private gentleman than a sovereign.”

“ Still,” said Sophy, “ I cannot help wishing that poor Prince Charles may be restored to the throne : he suffered for his father’s faults, though he was not guilty of them.”

“ Your wish will be gratified,” replied her mother ; “ but I am not sure whether you may not hereafter repent of it.”

CONVERSATION FORTY-FOURTH.

CHARLES THE SECOND.

“INDEED, mamma,” said Sophy, after she had read the reign of Charles the Second, “you guessed right, in what you said about my wish, that Prince Charles might be restored to his father’s throne; I begin to be sorry that Richard Cromwell did not succeed his father as Protector; for, he was of a quiet character, and, though he might not have been as wise as his father, I dare say he would have governed better than Charles.”

“But,” replied her mother, “the government would have continued a Commonwealth; and I think it much better for England that the form

of a limited monarchy should have been restored. Though I do not approve of the licentious conduct of Charles ; on the other hand, I cannot agree with the Puritans, in thinking that all worldly pleasures lead to wickedness."

" Yet," said Sophy, " do you not think that in the court of Charles the Second they did ? "

" Certainly ; because those pleasures were indulged in to excess ; and excess is always wrong : it turns joy into sorrow, and even converts virtues into vices."

" I do not understand that, mamma ; " said Sophy, " surely people cannot be too virtuous ? "

" That is true," replied her mother ; " but, I will explain to you how I mean that, by excess, virtues are converted into vices. Prudence and economy, for instance, are virtues ; men should be careful of their property, and not

spend their money improperly, nor spend more than they can afford ; but if, from an over indulgence of these virtues, a man becomes stingy, he changes them into avarice, which is a vice."

" Yes," said Sophy ; " and if a child eats too many cakes and good things, the pleasure of eating is changed into the pain of sickness."

" True," said her mother ; " excess, you see, is always wrong ; for, it converts virtue into vice, and pleasure into pain. Now, in order to avoid falling into such errors, the Puritans thought it right to deny themselves the enjoyment of almost all worldly pleasures."

" It might be a safe way," said Sophy, " in order not to do wrong ; but I think it is a very dismal one."

" Our heavenly Father is so full of love and kindness to all his creatures, and has so bountifully furnished them

all with the means of enjoyment," said her mother, "that I cannot believe, as the Puritans did, that all these were meant by him only as temptations to be resisted ; it seems more natural to think he designs that even in this life man should enjoy all the happiness that is consistent with innocence ; else why should he have made this world so gay and so beautiful ; heaping on it stores of natural luxuries ; covering the trees not only with rich foliage and sweet blossoms, but with delicious fruit ; enlightening the lovely scene by a splendid sun, refreshing it with balmy showers ? It would be impossible that a pure and devout heart could feel that gratitude to God for allowing us to take pleasure in His wonderful works, if such pleasure were of itself sinful. But it would be endless to attempt to enumerate the blessings which he has shed upon this world, or the variety of pleasurable

sensations which he has given us, and which many of us do not sufficiently value, because custom weakens the force of daily enjoyment."

"Oh! mamma, I never grow accustomed to the pleasure of eating and drinking, when I am hungry and thirsty, so as not to enjoy it. But I also enjoy giving food and drink to the poor who are in want."

"That," returned her mother, "is an enjoyment of a superior kind; for, it is not merely an animal gratification, such as sheep and cattle enjoy; but, it is that of a benevolent rational being, who delights in giving pleasure to others."

"Then I do think, mamma, when one is happy, there is a pleasure in every thing one does: how I enjoy running about in the green fields and the fresh air, and then resting when I am tired, and gathering the sweet flowers in the meadows, and looking at

the pretty blossoms in the orchard, and thinking of the nice fruit that will grow from them and be ripe in autumn ! ”

“ Very true, my dear child ; but do you at the same time feel that gratitude towards Him who has showered so many blessings on you ? ”

“ Oh ! that is another, and a better sort of enjoyment, mamma, to love God for being so good to us.”

“ Then, Sophy, you must not only love but obey him also.”

“ Don’t you think, mamma, that the more we love God, the more we shall obey him ? for, the more we love any one, the more we wish to please him.”

“ That is true ; and the more you study the works of God, the better you will be able to understand how wisely and wonderfully they are done, and how much cause we have both to love and to obey him. Such studies

are another source of worldly enjoyment, and one of the highest description."

"Oh yes!" said Sophy—"I am so fond of reading about the transformation of insects, and the instincts of animals, how the trees grow, and I don't know how many other things."

"You may well say so," replied her mother, "for they are endless."

"But, though there are so many things to enjoy," said Sophy, "there is also a great deal of sickness and suffering of one kind or another to bear."

"It is," replied her mother, "the necessary consequence of this world being a state of trial. The pain and affliction we must all undergo are the trials which our heavenly Father has ordained for us, and which it is our duty to bear with pious resignation, as coming from him, who afflicts us for our good, or chastises us for the faults we have been guilty of; for, by far the greater

part of the sufferings of this world arises either from the weakness or from the wickedness of mankind ; intemperance in eating and drinking ; in rioting or dissipation ; or, in other words, by excess of indulgence in the blessings bestowed on them, which produces a variety of diseases, and often brings their lives to an early close."

" That must have happened very frequently with the courtiers of Charles the Second," said Sophy.

" No doubt," replied her mother, " the greater number suffered from the diseases brought on by these causes. Let us hope that they suffered also from remorse of conscience, and repentance for the faults they had committed.

" To virtuous men who walk in the path of righteousness this is neither a wicked nor a miserable world, and their trials are such only as God knows they have strength to bear, and which

will purify them and lead them to a blessed futurity. Perhaps, the right path lies between the licentiousness of the court of Charles the Second and the austere manners of the Puritans. Excesses on one side are apt to produce opposite excesses on the other. The Puritans thought that religion and virtue consisted in habits and manners totally different from those of the court; they, therefore, assumed the greatest austerity of dress and manners, while the courtiers, disgusted by their severity, threw themselves into the opposite extreme, and affected an unnatural contempt for virtue. Thus they each fell into error, by following their acrimonious feelings, or by indulging their vicious inclinations, instead of calmly and humbly endeavouring to find out where the truth lay."

CONVERSATION FORTY-FIFTH.

JAMES THE SECOND.

“ THEY have soon got rid of James the Second, mamma,” said Sophy ; “ I think the people, after having been so long used to a civil war, seem to have had less objection to rising in insurrection than they had before.”

“ And yet,” replied her mother, “ nothing is more likely to restrain them from insurrection than an acquaintance with the horrors of civil war. But the insurrection against James the Second was not of this description : the opinion of all ranks of people was so generally against him, that they felt persuaded they could dispossess him of his crown without shedding blood.”

“ But I should not have liked to have been his daughter and reigned in his place,” said Sophy, “ however much he might have been to blame.”

“ It was a hard case for Mary,” replied her mother, “ but there was, perhaps, some excuse for her, because when a woman marries, her duty to her husband supersedes that to her father; but her first duty is towards her country, and, as she was a sincere Protestant, she could not doubt but that it was more for the good of the country that her husband should reign than her father.”

CONVERSATION FORTY-SIXTH.

WILLIAM AND MARY.

“THE Revolution of 1688,” observed Sophy’s mother, “secured the liberties of the English people. If they bound themselves by allegiance to the king, he also was bound to govern them according to the laws.”

“How happy they must all have felt, mamma, to have been comfortably settled,” said Sophy.

“Not at first,” replied her mother; “when things undergo a great change, it requires some length of time to get them settled in their new order.”

“That I know it does,” said Sophy. “It is the case with little things as well as with great ones. When we go

into the country, I cannot, for some time, get my things set to rights ; and, even when I do, I am at a loss to recollect where my thimble or my copy-book or my gloves are kept, and I am hunting in every hole and corner to find them."

" And," observed her mother, " when these things, instead of being thimbles or gloves, are men who have understandings and wills of their own, they will not so quietly rest in their new holes and corners as thimbles and gloves. One man would say, his hole was not large enough for him, and another would complain of being confined to a corner."

" Well then," said Sophy, laughing, " he might play at puss in the corner with his opposite neighbour, and beckon to him to change places with him."

" Yes, but," replied her mother, " if you leave your station, there is some risk of another slipping into it

and keeping you out. However, the people became settled at last, and laws were made for preventing any king from meddling with their newly established liberties ; and from that time, whenever any attempt has been made to infringe those liberties, the people have always steadfastly maintained them.”

“ I do not understand, mamma,” said Sophy, “ about the East India Company, which was established in this reign. Why was it necessary to have an East India Company ? Why should not every merchant buy and sell in India, just the same as they did in other countries ? ”

“ At the time this Company was formed,” replied her mother, “ it was thought that there was so great a risk in trading with so very distant a part of the globe, that no single merchant would have ventured to undertake it alone ; so several of them associated together,

and called themselves the East India Company. They then paid a sum of money to the government to grant them a charter, which allowed them the privilege of being the only persons who could trade with India."

"That was like the privileges of the corporations of towns, which you told me about," said Sophy.

"Very like," replied her mother; "for it was a permission for this Company to do what the rest of the king's subjects were not allowed to do."

"But was that fair to his other subjects, mamma? for, before this charter was granted, any of them might trade to India, but, afterwards, only the Company could do it. So I think that the king began by taking away from his subjects in general a right, which he afterwards granted to a few only."

"You are quite right," said her mother; "but I have just told you that these merchants persuaded the king

that there was too much risk in trading with India, for any of them to undertake it singly. Therefore in establishing this Company the king believed that he was conferring a privilege on a few of his subjects, which could not be enjoyed by the people in common. But every man who agreed to the laws and regulations of this Company, and contributed to its funds, might become a member of it. Now that navigation is better understood, and that the greater part of India has become subject to the English, no one believes that these dangers exist. All pretext for such a privilege being, therefore, at an end, it has been abolished, and the trade to both India and China is open to every one. The East India Company, it is true, still exists, but it was found by experience that private traders managed matters better, and made larger profits. The Company, therefore, now confine themselves wholly to the affairs of go-

vernment, and this is no trifling business in so extensive a country as India."

"But does not the Queen govern the English colonies in India?" asked Sophy.

"The English government and the India Company manage it between them," replied her mother; "but the way in which this is done is far too difficult for you to understand."

"Well, however, I am glad," said Sophy, "that the exclusive privilege of trade given by the charter is abolished. It is not like Magna Charta, which increased the liberty of every body, but it increased the liberty only of a few people, by diminishing that of a great many. I should wish trade to be free to all men, that they may buy where they can get things cheapest, and sell where they can sell them dearest."

"Well, my dear," said her mother, smiling, "you would make an excel-

lent merchant: you understand your own interest in buying and selling so well."

"Oh, no!" cried Sophy, blushing, because she thought her mother accused her of selfish feelings; "if you remember, when you talked about buying and selling a long time ago, you said that things sold dear in places where people were in very great want of them; and there can be no harm in wishing these people to have what they want so much, even though we get a great profit by it."

"None at all, my dear: I wish every sort and description of persons to be as free to trade as to breathe; and I only set you upon defending your argument to see whether you understood what you were saying. A monopoly of trade is quite unjustifiable."

"What is a monopoly?" inquired Sophy.

"It is what we have been talking

of, my dear : a privilege granted to any man, or any set of men, to buy and sell to the exclusion of other persons. There are, however, some circumstances under which a monopoly may be fairly granted ; if a man discover or invent any thing very useful to the public, it is but just that he should have the sole right of selling it. As, for instance, when Bramah invented a particular lock, which could not be picked ; or, when cloaks and clogs were rendered water proof by a coating of India rubber, the authors of these inventions certainly deserved to have the exclusive right of disposing of them."

" Yes," said Sophy. " It is quite fair that they should be rewarded for their discoveries."

" These monopolies are granted," said Mrs. B., " not only as a reward to the inventors, but as an encouragement to

others to set about making useful inventions or discoveries."

"But, it must be very inconvenient to have but one shop for selling locks or water-proof cloaks," said Sophy.

"That is not the case," replied her mother. "Other shops buy these articles of their inventors, and then they are at liberty to resell them to the public. Such monopolies are called Patents, and are granted only for a certain number of years, which is considered as a sufficient reward to the inventor."

"Oh! I have often heard of patent things," said Sophy. "There are patent Inkstands, and patent Pens, and patent Medicines, and I know not how many patent things. To be sure all these patents are very fair."

"Yes," said Mrs. B.; "because both the proprietor and the public profit by them; for, if this encouragement was not given to inventions, fewer would

be made. In former times, the king often granted a monopoly for the sale of some particular article to one of his favourites, who had no other right to it than from the King's grant ; this was always unjust to the public. At last, a law was made in King James I.'s time, prohibiting all such grants, except to the inventors of new and useful things ; and these are called Patents, because they are granted by a deed, called the King's letters patent ; meaning that the letter is patent, or open to be read by every one. Monopolies have also been granted to companies, such as the East India Company, of which we have been speaking. These are not now legal, unless granted by Act of Parliament. These latter are fair monopolies so long as they are necessary to the encouragement of trade, but unjust when they are no longer required."

" Then, I suppose," said Sophy,

“ that now, every body is at liberty to buy and sell what they choose, and how they choose, and where they choose, and when they choose ? ”

“ No ! ” replied her mother ; “ there are other things which interfere with the freedom of trade beside patents and monopolies ; and such are taxes. If men deal in foreign goods, in other words, exchange English commodities for those of foreign countries, they pay a duty or tax upon the goods they import, or bring into the ports of England, and also upon many of the goods exported, or carried out of the ports. This tax is called Custom Duty, meaning the old accustomed duty, although it has been very much altered since that name was first given to it, and is paid, in all our seaports, at places called custom houses. There is another tax, which is laid on many articles of English manufacture, called the Excise. This word is derived from

the Latin, and means something cut or taken off the manufacturer's profits."

"Oh, I am very sorry for that!" exclaimed Sophy; "because, it must oblige the manufacturers to sell those goods dearer, and the poor people will not be able to buy them."

"These taxes," said her mother, "certainly add to the price of the goods, and as certainly prevent a class of people from buying them, who, had they been sold cheaper, could have afforded to purchase them."

"And do other countries treat us in the same way, mamma, and make our English goods pay a tax at their custom houses?"

"Yes, they do. They say, 'If you put a restraint on our trade, we will put a restraint on yours.'"

"That seems but fair," said Sophy.
"It is tit for tat."

"It is much more foolish than fair, if that is their only reason," replied her

mother. “ We injure their trade, it is true, when we oblige their goods to pay duty at the custom house; because we thereby lessen the sale; but we injure our own people still more, by obliging them to pay dearly for their goods; or, perhaps, preventing them from buying them at all. So, I should say that, even if other countries are determined to make the goods we send them pay heavy duties, we ought to be wise enough not to follow their example, when we want their goods.”

“ And if we did not want them,” said Sophy, “ we should not send for them, or take them when they were brought to us.”

“ Very true,” replied her mother, “ for a long time people supposed that the only profit in trade, was made by the seller; forgetting that if the buyer did not gain likewise by his purchase, he would soon leave off buying.”

“ So that, if we put a high customs

duty on French goods," said Sophy, "to revenge ourselves for the French putting a high duty on English goods, we injure ourselves as much as we do the French."

"Yes," said her mother, "you must be careful to remember that there are two ways in which an English merchant may gain a profit, by dealing with a foreign merchant: first, he may gain by selling him English goods; secondly, he may gain by buying from him foreign goods. If foreign governments will not allow him to gain in the first way, and the English government will not allow him to gain in the second way, there can be no gain either way."

"Then it is plain," said Sophy, "that we should both sell more, and buy more, if it were not for these foolish duties."

"And if we sold more and bought more," said her mother, "a greater number of people would be employed

to make the additional quantity of goods ; and thus more men would be able to gain their livelihood."

" And besides," added Sophy, " if more goods were bought and sold, more people would enjoy them : if a hundred coats were sold instead of eighty, there would be a hundred men clothed instead of eighty."

" However," observed her mother, " you must not forget that the queen must have money to pay the expenses of government, and money can be raised only by taxes."

" To be sure," said Sophy, " since we will no longer allow our kings and queens to go a begging. But, mamma, cannot they raise taxes some other way ; such as taxes on houses, carriages, and lands, and such luxuries as the rich pay for and the poor do not ? "

" I have before told you that these luxuries are already highly taxed, and that a sufficient sum could not be raised

for the purpose of governing unless the poor paid some share of it. Besides, it is fair they should contribute in due proportion to the support of a government which protects their persons and what property they may have, and enables them to gain a livelihood. When I speak of the rich and poor generally, I mean to divide the people into two classes—the higher and the lower ; those who are in affluence, and those who are not. Now, you will be surprised to hear that this poor class has still larger possessions than the rich one.”

“ Oh, mamma ! what can you mean ? ”

“ I mean, precisely what I say, that all the poor possess more wealth than all the rich ; but then, the number of poor is so much greater, that, when this wealth is divided among them, the share of each individual is much smaller than the share of one of the rich class. Be-

sides, as this pittance is unequally divided, many of them have very little, and the greatest number nothing but what they can earn by their labour. Indeed, it is this labour which forms the principal part of their wealth, as it brings them wages."

"Well!" cried Sophy, "I never should have supposed that, in any way or manner, the poor could have possessed more than the rich."

"Though," resumed her mother, "I am more accustomed to think of such things than you are, I could not help being much surprised, when I heard a manufacturer say, that three quarters of the manufactured goods sold in England were bought by the poor. Now, if they buy so much more than the rich, they must have more wealth to pay for it."

"Certainly," said Sophy; "and yet it seems very strange that the poor who wear such coarse clothing, and

are many of them even in rags, should spend more than the rich. However, I think I can understand it, when I consider how many more poor there are than rich ; though each poor man buys but little, still altogether they buy more than the rich."

" And do you know, mamma, how much money the queen gets by the duty on foreign goods brought into this country ? "

" We will talk about that at our next Conversation," replied her mother : " you have learned quite enough to-day."

CONVERSATION FORTY-SEVENTH.

ON THE REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE OF
GOVERNMENT.

“ You inquired yesterday,” said Mrs. B., “ how much money the queen gets by the duty on foreign goods brought into this country. In the year 1842, the duties paid at the custom house amounted to no less a sum than 22,500,000*l.*, but, this comprehends duties on goods imported as well as exported ; that is to say, goods which are brought into the kingdom, as well as those which are sent out of it.”

“ Oh dear !” exclaimed Sophy : “ that is so prodigious a sum, that I can hardly understand how much it means.”

“ You are too young to be able to do

so, but, if you remember it now, you will understand it when you grow older."

"I hope by that time, mamma, the duties will be very much less, if not quite abolished, like the India Company."

"But then," said her mother, "how is the government to obtain money? What I wish for, is, that the duties should be diminished for the sake of the people, and the income increased for the sake of the government."

"You will then wish in vain, mamma, for, what the one gains the other must lose."

"I beg your pardon; a duty may be lessened, and yet the income it brings into government be increased."

"I think, mamma, you are talking in riddles to-day."

"It appears like a riddle, it is true," replied her mother, "but it is easily explained. You have just seen that,

when the duty is lower, there are more goods sold, so the low duty on a large quantity of goods may be greater in amount than the high duty on a smaller quantity. And experience has shown that when the government has lowered a duty, it has often brought in more money than before."

"That is very curious, indeed," said Sophy, "and I am glad of it; because, the queen can get more money to govern with, and the people can get goods cheaper."

"Yes," replied her mother, "government must raise taxes of one kind or other; but, a wise government endeavours to discover which articles can be taxed with the least inconvenience to the people, and how great the tax on each ought to be, so as to bring in altogether the greatest quantity of money. If a tax is so high as to diminish very greatly the sale of the article taxed, it would defeat its own pur-

pose. For instance, a minister once laid so heavy a tax on windows, that people went to the expense of blocking some of them up ; and so heavy a tax on tea, that it was not only smuggled into the kingdom at great risk in order to avoid the tax, but many poor people deprived themselves of tea, being unable to pay it : thus the tax defeated its own purpose."

" And can you tell me," said Sophy, " how much the queen gets by other taxes ? "

" The other taxes amount to nearly 26,000,000*l.*"

" And is that all ? " enquired Sophy.

" No," replied her mother. " The queen has some other sources of revenue, such as lands belonging to the crown, &c., but, I think I have told you as much as your little head can manage."

" Oh ! but I should like exceedingly

to know how much the queen receives in all."

"Above 48,000,000*l.*," said her mother; "but, you must not suppose that she spends all this for the purposes of government. More than 29,000,000*l.* goes to pay the interest of the national debt; above a million and a half to defray the expense of levying the taxes, that is, in paying custom-house officers, tax-gatherers, &c., so that there remains less than 18,000,000*l.* to defray what would be the actual expenses of government, if there were no debt, and no taxes."

"I remember," said Sophy, "the story of the national debt in Willy's Holydays. What a debt it must be to require 29,000,000*l.* merely to pay the interest! And pray, mamma, how is the rest of the money spent?"

"The remainder, consisting of 18,000,000*l.*, is disposed of thus," replied her mother. "First, there are the

army and navy to provide for ; and it is no trifling thing to feed and clothe all the soldiers and sailors, to furnish them with arms, to build men of war for the sailors, and barracks for the soldiers. The army and navy cost together about 12,000,000*l.*

“ Then, there are the courts of justice, the expenses of which comprehend the salaries of all the judges, with the Lord Chancellor at their head. This costs the nation 1,000,000*l.* Then come the common expenses of government, called the civil list, which comprehends the salaries of governors of foreign colonies, or of public institutions in England ; the salaries of the ambassadors to all the foreign courts, who, as they represent their sovereign, must live with a considerable degree of splendour, which is very expensive. Then there are the salaries of all the public officers, and their clerks, and also pensions paid to different members

of the royal family, and other persons."

"Well!" exclaimed Sophy, "these expenses seem to me so enormous, that I begin to think the queen will hardly have money enough."

"Then," resumed her mother, "there is the expense of keeping up the queen's court, and her household establishment."

"Oh!" cried Sophy, "I should like to know how much she has to keep house with."

"You must consider," said her mother, "that she has a great many houses, all of which are palaces: and that, beside common servants, the royal family are attended by the first lords and ladies of the land, whose salaries are considerable. You will not perhaps think it extravagant, when I tell you that she is allowed for these expenses about 400,000*l.*,"

out of which her pocket money, which is called her privy purse, is reckoned at 60,000*l.*”

“I should think not,” said Sophy; “but to confess the truth, I do not well understand how much such a sum means, so I cannot judge.”

“I do not think that I can form to myself a much more accurate idea of these large sums than you do,” replied her mother; “but, vague as our ideas may be as to numbers, they will enable us to form a general notion of the revenue and expenditure of government.”

CONVERSATION FORTY-EIGHTH.

QUEEN ANNE.

“QUEEN ANNE’s reign was celebrated for her victories ; and, as they were useful victories in checking the ambitious career of Louis the Fourteenth, we may allow them their due share of glory. But, as your history justly observes, in speaking of the battle of Blenheim : ‘In a great battle, whichever side wins, there is sure to be misery for a great many families on both sides.’ One cannot think without horror of nearly forty thousand men in the prime of their lives dying of agonising wounds on the field of battle. Instead of

having their last moments soothed by the affectionate endearments of their family, they were disturbed by the groans of their fellow-sufferers ; and no friendly hand was there to give them so much as a cup of cold water. But God was with them still, and those who were worthy to receive his mercies were soon comforted. Those who died on the field of battle were, perhaps, not the most to be pitied. Who can tell the wretchedness of suffering from wounds where there is an insufficiency of medical assistance and accommodation to alleviate their pain ; and who can tell the more acute sufferings of the widows and orphans made by this dreadful battle ? When the news of it first arrived in England, the whole nation seemed to be in a state of rejoicing ; but, how different would be the scene in the houses where these poor bereaved families shut themselves up, to avoid the sound

and sight of these festivities, the firing of cannon, by which their fathers and their brothers fell, the pealing of those bells which sounded as their knell! It would be too painful to continue this description; the more you enter into details, the more you see and feel the sufferings of the individual, both in body and mind.

“ Let us turn, therefore to an event of a far different nature, the union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland; which was established on such liberal principles, that it has remained unshaken, and proved a mutual advantage to both nations, increasing their strength and their wealth. By this union the Scotch retain their religion and their laws, and send sixteen peers and forty-five commoners to represent them in parliament.

“ The conquest of Gibraltar gave also a great acquisition to England, by the protection it afforded to commerce,

— commerce, that kind nurse which cures all the ravages of war, which gives wealth instead of poverty, births instead of deaths, and joy instead of sorrow.”

CONVERSATION FORTY-NINTH.

GEORGE THE FIRST.

“ I must say, mamma, I can’t help pitying the poor Pretender, who was punished for no fault of his own, but, for those of his grandfather James the Second. He might perhaps have made as good a king as William ; and, according to the laws of the land, he certainly had the best title to the throne.”

“ All that is very true,” replied her mother ; “ but, we must not put the welfare of a whole nation in competition with that of a single man. When the nation rises up against the sovereign, and he has scarcely an individual to take his part, it affords a strong

proof that his government has been decidedly bad ; and as James's sons and grandsons were in all probability brought up in the same despotic principles, there was very little chance that the Pretender should become a good king. He had a legal right to the throne, no doubt, until that right was abolished by the Revolution, which transferred it to the daughter of James and her husband. The Pretender, however, has great claim to our pity, as well as every pretender who loses his crown from the mis-government of his forefathers.”

“ In reading history,” said Sophy, “ we naturally take more interest in the kings and princes than in any other set of men ; because, hearing so much more about them, we feel more for them, and especially when they are unhappy.”

“ But you must not forget,” observed her mother, “ that, if we allow

one man to be raised so much above all others as the sovereign is above his people, it is not merely for his own selfish advantage, but for that of his people. In return for the protection he affords them, they give him power and wealth to enable him to govern, and to live in splendour; but, the good of the people, not that of the sovereign, is the object to be kept in view. In a wise government these two interests are the same; and it is only when a sovereign does not govern according to law, but aims at despotism, that his interests are opposed to those of his people.”

CONVERSATION FIFTIETH.

GEORGE THE SECOND.

“ THIS last rebellion,” said Sophy, “ was far more important than the other ; and I feel so much pity for the poor young Pretender, that if I had lived at that time I think I should have become a Jacobite, if it had not been for the Roman Catholic religion. So, it is better that things should have ended as they did ; but, does not it seem hard that such distant relations as the princes of the House of Hanover should be called from a foreign country to govern us, instead of the children and grandchildren of James ? So long as his two daughters, Mary and Anne reigned, it seemed fair enough.”

“ When you read the History of England,” said her mother, “ you must remember that you are reading that of the people, rather than that of the sovereign ; the history of millions of men, rather than that of a single individual who rules over them. You must bear in mind that this individual is made king for the sake of the people, whom he is to protect and govern according to the laws—laws made by the people themselves, and which give him no more power than is necessary to enable him to protect the lives, the persons, and the property of his subjects, and that, in civilised countries, the sovereign is in fact but the first magistrate.

“ Louis the Fourteenth, when he reigned in France, considered his people much in the same light as a farmer does his cattle, ready to be butchered for his service whenever required ; and his glorious and bloody

wars were little better than a butchery. When one of his ministers one day spoke to him of the rights of the different orders of the people, and of the good of the state, he replied, ‘The State? I am the State! ’ ”

“ He must have been an idiot, mamma, to have talked such nonsense.”

“ No, my dear; the French considered him as one of their greatest monarchs. He had been bred up from his childhood with this idea of his superiority; and he must have been a noble-minded man indeed who, under such circumstances, could place himself upon a level with his fellow-creatures. But his family was taught a bitter lesson, that they were men like the subjects whom they ruled. Sovereigns like Louis the 14th lead to such a revolution as that which has since occurred in France.”

CONVERSATION FIFTY-FIRST.

GEORGE THE THIRD.

AMERICA.

“ It was very natural,” said Sophy, “ that the Americans should prefer being governed by one of their own people, than by a king on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean ; especially as in making a new government for themselves, they might do it just in the way they liked best. They might keep all the good English laws, and set aside those which hurt their commerce or their liberties in any way.”

“ True,” said her mother, “ and they established a republican form of government, because they thought it would give them more liberty than a

monarchy, even limited as it is in Great Britain. They had suffered much while they were English colonies, from the restraints imposed upon their trade. The king afforded them protection, it is true, by sending a governor to rule over them and troops to defend them ; but, in return for this, the king required, that in their foreign trade they should buy and sell to England or the English colonies, in preference to any other country.”

“ What, mamma ! were they not free to buy goods where they were cheapest, and sell them where they were dearest ? ”

“ No ; they were obliged to purchase all their sugars and coffee, for instance, of our West Indian settlements, though they were often sold cheaper in other markets ; and the same with many other articles. It is true that we in return favoured their commerce, by purchasing their goods

in preference to those of other countries, which were often better and cheaper."

"Well, there was something fair in that," observed Sophy.

"That was a hardship on the English," replied her mother.

"So then," said Sophy, "the king did both his English and his American subjects harm, by injuring the trade of each of them."

"It is very true," replied her mother: "the only apology he had was, that he believed that he was doing them good; but, you may recollect that we agreed that it is not sufficient for a man to act according to his conscience: he must first take care that his conscience is sufficiently enlightened, to be able clearly to distinguish between right and wrong. The true advantages of free trade were at that time not well understood, and, alas! I am sorry to say, that people

in general still know very little about them ; but, whether with a good or a bad intention, the evils of restricted commerce fall equally heavy on a country.”

“ And was it on this account, mamma, that the Americans revolted from England ? ”

“ No ; the immediate cause of the rebellion was the imposition of taxes, which they thought unjust. The fact is, that when a colony feels strong enough to maintain and govern itself, the colonists prefer governing themselves to being governed from a distance.”

“ I do not think that is right, mamma. If the king took care of them when they were so weak as not to be able to defend themselves, it seems ungrateful to revolt from him as soon as they can do without his protection.”

“ We do not call sons ungrateful,”

said her mother, “if they separate from their father when they are grown up, and are not daily guided by his commands, as they were when children.”

“But then they do not revolt from their father,” said Sophy ; “that would be unpardonable.”

“Their father does not abuse his power over them,” replied she. “As they grow up, he gives them more and more liberty, and when they reach manhood, allows them to be independent. Indeed, if he did not, the law would emancipate them at the age of twenty-one, which is called their majority, being the age at which they are entitled to be independent.”

“But, you must remember that, although we call the old country, from which another is colonized, the mother country, the relation between them becomes very much weakened in a few generations ; and, although the colonists will for a long time feel attachment to

the country from which their fathers came, this cannot be compared to the love of a child for his father when grown up."

"I think, mamma, that there ought to be a majority for colonies."

"It would be difficult," replied her mother, "to fix the period of their majority; for, some colonies are so fortunately situated, that they grow rich and populous, and are able to govern themselves in a very few years from their first establishment; others require twenty, fifty, or perhaps one hundred years before they are wealthy and powerful enough to go on without assistance.

"You shall read the life of General Washington. He was not only a military hero, but, I think he was one of the best and wisest men that ever existed. He fought for the liberty and independence of his country, and was so far from being actuated by ambitious

views, that, when that independence was secured, he would accept of no reward. He became the president of the Commonwealth only till it was firmly established ; he then retired from public life, and died honoured and respected by the whole nation.”

“ How good a man ! ” exclaimed Sophy. “ Then have we nothing to do with America now, mamma ? ”

“ We have kept the provinces of Canada and Nova Scotia,” answered she, “ which in the contest always took part with Great Britain. In regard to the independent provinces now called the United States of America, we carry on a very active commerce, much more advantageous to both parties than it was, when those provinces belonged to us ; and it would be still more so, were the trade not shackled by duties and other restrictions.

“ There is one thing, however, for which I cannot pardon the Americans,

and that is, that, after having rendered themselves independent, and established equality of ranks, they should admit of slavery of the negroes in their country."

"That is a great shame," said Sophy.

"It is, indeed," replied her mother ; "but, much as they loved liberty, they were selfish enough to love their own interest still more ; and, as they produce a great deal of cotton and tobacco in the southern provinces, they import negroes for its cultivation. There is certainly a very considerable party in America against this injustice ; but the government is not strong enough to make the people relinquish so iniquitous a traffic."

"Not strong enough, mamma !" exclaimed Sophy : "how can a government govern, if it is not strong enough to make the people obey ?"

"You have hitherto only heard and read, my dear, of despotic sovereigns

and despotic nobles ; but there also is such a thing as a people being themselves despotic ; and this is not unfrequently the case in popular republics. The government, unless it absolutely comes to a breach with them, is obliged now and then to give way ; and, I am sorry to say, that some of the American provinces are occasionally guilty of unjustifiable acts, which the government overlooks, rather than give rise to a civil war. So you see, my dear, that despotism is a bad thing in itself, whether it exists in a sovereign, a class of nobles, or the people at large."

" Well ! mamma, I am rather glad to know that ; because, when I heard so much of the liberty of republics, I could not help half wishing that our government had been republican ; but now, I am sure that a limited monarchy such as we have, composed of King, Lords, and Commons, is the best ; because, you see, they keep each other in

order. If the King should be inclined to despotism, the Lords and Commons would prevent him. If the Lords should attempt to encroach on the King's prerogative, the people would side with the King to prevent them ; and if the people should attempt to get too much liberty — no, I do not mean too much, for you cannot have too much right and proper liberty, but that wrong sort of liberty, which you say the American people have — then the King and the Lords would restrain them."

" You have settled it all very rightly," replied her mother.

" We have now," added she, " finished our remarks on the history of England."

" But, mamma, will you not tell us something more of the French revolution ? The history says so little about it."

" The French revolution," replied

Mrs. B., “is so complicated and extensive, both in regard to the circumstances which gave rise to it, and the consequences which have followed it, that it requires all the reason of a full-grown person to comprehend this event; an event the most important which has occurred since the world has become civilized: for its influence, far from being confined to the French people, has spread throughout mankind. This revolution, it is true, has been stained with the blackest crimes, and the most savage cruelty, and rendered a whole generation miserable. But a merciful Providence has brought good out of evil. A liberal government is now established in France, and a better knowledge of, and a higher regard for, the principles of liberty throughout the world.”

THE END.

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